

Subject: Parish Life! from Our Sunday Visitor

Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.

Parish Life! from OSV



News and resources for your parish

March 2007

Welcome to **Parish Life!** from Our Sunday Visitor. As a parish leader who has ordered from Our Sunday Visitor in the past, you're receiving this third edition of our special e-newsletter just for parishes!

Each month you'll find timely content, practical information, and insightful inspiration delivered right to your inbox. We'd love to hear from you as well, so please e-mail us with questions or topics you would like to see discussed in future editions: yyoung@osv.com.

To continue receiving this monthly e-newsletter, you need do nothing. To unsubscribe, please follow the instructions at the bottom of the page.

Feel free to forward this email to a friend who might be interested.

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Sacrament of Charity

"The Holy Eucharist is the gift that Jesus Christ makes of himself, thus revealing to us God's infinite love for every man and woman," Pope Benedict recently wrote in his opening of his most recent apostolic exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis* ("Sacrament of Charity"). After

Easter Renewal by Lorene Hanley Duquin

Between the rigors of Holy Week in early April and the onset of the sacramental season in May and June, most parishes experience a few weeks of calm. Why not set aside a day during this time to renew the parish staff?

Announce in the bulletin that the office will be closed that day. Structure the day with opportunities for silent reflection, prayer and a program to recommit.

Here's a possible agenda:

- Start with a prayer that allows staff members to share their special intentions.
- Set aside an hour of quiet time. Ask staff members to silently reflect on the experience of Lent, Holy Week and Easter.
- Come back together to share special moments of conversion, inspiration and outreach that happened during Lent and Easter.
- Celebrate with a catered lunch or an outing to a local restaurant.
- Start the afternoon with a prayer that encourages staff members to pray for one another.
- Set aside an hour of quiet time. Ask staff members to reflect on the gifts of each person on the staff.
- Come back together to identify the strengths of the staff. Encourage ideas on how you can work together more effectively to serve the people of the parish.
- Close with a recommitment service and prayers of thanksgiving to the risen Lord for this opportunity for spiritual renewal.

[Visit OSV's web section: Lent -- The Road to Easter](#)

We've Got Your Numbers!

How many of your neighbors are Catholic? Across the United States, 23.2 percent of the population is Catholic (2006). But what about in your state? Five states have a Catholic population of more than 30 percent — Rhode Island, 59.2 percent; Massachusetts, 42.7; New Jersey, 41.1; Connecticut, 38.7; and New York, 37.6. On the other end of the spectrum, four states are below 4 percent — Arkansas, 3.9 percent; South Carolina, 3.7; Alabama, 3.4; and the lowest, Tennessee, 3.2. For more statistics and information about the Catholic Church in the United States, see [The Catholic Almanac](#) (Our Sunday Visitor).

reviewing everything bishops discussed at their world synod that concluded the Year of the Eucharist in 2005, Pope Benedict has released this pastoral document so that each of us may approach the Eucharist with a renewed sense of wonder and joy. Writing to Catholics worldwide — not as a theologian, but as a personal pastor — the pope explains that he wishes to encourage “Christian people to deepen their understanding of the relationship between the Eucharistic mystery, the liturgical action, and the new spiritual worship which derives from the Eucharist as the sacrament of charity.”

For more information on the Pope's latest letter, as well as information on how to order a pamphlet that explains the main points, [please click here](#).

Order the pamphlet and other OSV products from our online catalog

Quick links!

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No Secret Here

The Oprah-touted “Secret” book and DVD have become publishing sensations, convincing millions of people they can achieve wealth, health and happiness through the “Law of Attraction.” Catholics should not be fooled by this spiritual fad, which dresses up stale New Age ideas into a slick, high-tech package.

['The Secret' is just same old New Age philosophy](#)

A Steward Reflects...

“So, too, we, though many, are one body in Christ . . . we have gifts that differ according to the favor bestowed on each of us” (Rom 12:5-6).

Each individual possesses different gifts to use in service to the Lord, and so does each parish. Think about where your parish is located within the country, your diocese, the demographic make-up of your parishioners, and the needs within the community that your parish fills compared to other parishes. For example, do you have a strong outreach ministry for persons in need? Does your parish excel at prison ministry, early childhood education or work with the elderly? What gifts does your parish possess that are unique? Could these gifts be better used for the good of those in the community if you partnered with other area churches or organizations?

[For more information about stewardship, visit us on the web](#)

Easter Alleluia!

Finding ways to celebrate Easter that don't involve chocolate bunnies and overdoses of sugar are as easy as clicking to our special [Easter web site](#).

On our Easter celebrations page, you'll find craft ideas, recipes, reading material and meditations that help bring Easter and its blessings more fully into your life including family friendly projects, information on Divine Mercy Sunday and much more, including the real history of the Easter egg. If you are looking for a way to prolong Easter joy, be sure to check out our review of “Living the Mysteries.” The early Church had a process in which a teacher guided seekers through stages of inquiry and purification, culminating in a final phase called “mystagogy” — “the revelation of the mysteries.” Well-known apologists Scott Hahn and Mike Aquilina have written “Living the Mysteries,” which explains that all of us are “unfinished Christians,” detailing ways we can use the Easter season to deepen our understanding and relationship with the Lord.

For more information on ordering “Living the Mysteries: A Guide for Unfinished Christians” or to read an excerpt, [click here](#).

resources

- Q&A with Dr. Joseph White
- 7 Steps to Becoming Financially Free Small Group Study Program
- New VBS program: Great Bible Reef
- Register to win free programs and materials for YOUR parish

Upcoming Events

NCEA	April 10-13
NCCL	April 22-25
National Association of Lay Ministers	April 22-24

Let us know what you think!

We hope you've enjoyed our Parish Life! eNewsletter! Let us know what you think--we appreciate your comments, questions, suggestions, and requests! Email yyoung@osv.com.

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